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RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 0123
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR IMMEDIATE 0682
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0557
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE 0097
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000306

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STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/27/2016
TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [KHLs](#) [PINR](#) [ETRD](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: HOSTAGE-TAKING, SITREP #12

REF: LAGOS 297 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Acting Pol/Econ Chief Shannon Ross for Reasons 1.4 (D & E)

Hostage Welfare Update

11. (C) Shell, GON and other sources report the anticipated release of some of the hostages this morning was delayed because Delta State Governor Ibori announced the release and publicly claimed credit before the deal was sealed. Governor Ibori told Econoff additional medicine and Willbros letters to the hostages were delivered to them Sunday.

12. (C) The Thai families have declined to send letters to their hostages, citing personal reasons. The Thai Ambassador to Kenya will attempt to intervene. Otherwise, letters to the other hostages from their families will be dispatched shortly, and the Thai Ambassador will send letters to the Thai hostages.

Negotiations Update

13. (S) Governor Ibori told Econoff the kidnappers blame the delay on ongoing funeral rites for Government Ekpemukpolo's cousin, but he expects all of the hostages to be released by mid-week. Chief Edwin Clark, a member of Ibori's negotiating committee, claims the kidnappers' demand for a guarantee of no reprisals is the primary holdup in the negotiations. (Comment: The "official" negotiating channels through Governor Ibori and Chief Edwin Clark are providing little of substance, and they avoid meeting face-to-face. End comment.) Other Econoff sources say Clark is ineffective and they don't trust him. A federal government official says the hostage-takers have contacted them for negotiations rather than talk to Delta State officials. A Federated Niger Delta

Ijaw Communities (FNDIC) source told Econoff two foreign journalists would be going to the creeks to see some of the hostages this afternoon, but later the trip was called off because the creeks were unsafe.

14. (S) FNDIC sources in Warri told Econoff more about the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). The sources claimed MEND is FNDIC splinter group consisting of 50-100 of the more militant members led by Government Ekpemukpolo and two other radical former FNDIC leaders. (Note: The sources confirmed the description provided by January hostage Patrick Landry of his captors' leader matches Ekpemukpolo. End note.) The sources say Ekpemukpolo, leader of the Ijaw militants since Dokubo Asari was arrested, is afraid for his life, and launched the latest kidnapping to gain human shields to protect himself. They claim about 80 percent of the MEND militants come from Asari's group, and releasing him with a written guarantee of no reprisals is the only way to end the kidnappings. The sources say Asari was arrested because he was viewed as an active and vocal critic of a third Presidential term.

Energy Update: Shell Facilities Still Closed

15. (C) There is no change in the status of damaged or closed Shell facilities, and production remains reduced approximately 550,000 bpd. There are unconfirmed reports of an overnight attack on the pipeline at Chanomi Creek. Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) Managing Director Makoja reports they have recouped about 200-250 MW of the 850 MW lost last week by generation at the AGIP, Akpan and hydro

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plants in the north. Makoja expects the Escravos-Lagos gas pipeline to be down for quite some time. Meanwhile, PHCN is exploring additional plants to tap into and hopes to bring this power on-line in 1-2 weeks.

16. (C) A Chevron officer reports yesterday's pipeline sabotage could have a significant environmental impact. However, environmental assessment and remediation is difficult to carry out due to security issues, and frequently simply do not occur prior to dispersal of a spill.

Military Update

17. (S/NF) A military source reports the operational and movement orders for additional troops to expand the Joint Task Force has been temporarily delayed to avoid inciting further militant activity and jeopardizing the hostages. Another military source refuted earlier reports of civilian casualties in Nkerekoko, and of groundfire damage to one helicopter used in the attack which precipitated the current crisis.

Delta Working Group Initiated

18. (C) Post initiated a weekly Delta Working Group (DWG) consisting of U.S. Consulate personnel and oil/oil service company representatives to facilitate Delta security and hostage crisis information exchange (septel). The DWG representatives confirmed the attack on the Odidi II flowstation and the vessel incident near Onne reported yesterday. A Chevron vessel was approached by a rigid hull inflatable boat (RHIB) with 5-7 men armed with assault rifles. The RHIB circled, harassed, and attempted to board the Chevron vessel for 2 hours, while the Chevron boat crew responded with water cannon and evasive maneuvers until finally escaping the attackers. The Chevron crew repeatedly radioed to the Nigerian Navy for assistance but none was

forthcoming.

Media Update

¶9. (SBU) The media reports were dominated by accounts of the aborted partial release, scuttled by the Ibori administration's announcement and claims for credit.

Consular Update

¶10. (C) There have been no reports of additional attacks on AmCits.

Repatriation Plan Update

¶11. (C) Econoff in Warri has concerns about lack of apparent planning by Delta State government for hostage release logistics.
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